



JEWISH REFUGEES FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

International Rights and Redress Campaign

I. BACKGROUND

When the “refugee issue” is discussed within the context of the Middle East, people invariably refer to Palestinian refugees, not Jews displaced from Arab countries. Neither the mass violations of human rights nor the displacement of Jews from Arab countries has ever been adequately addressed by the international community.

It would be an injustice to recognize the rights of Palestinian refugees without recognizing equal rights for former Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

On two separate occasions the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ruled that Jews fleeing from Arab countries were ‘bona fide’ refugees who “fall within the mandate of (the UNHCR) office”. Yet, there was virtually no international response to the plight of close to 900,000 Jews who, since 1948, have been displaced from Arab countries.

As a matter of law and equity, no just, comprehensive Middle East peace can be reached without recognition of, and redress for, the uprooting, under Islamic regimes, of centuries-old Jewish communities in the Middle East and North Africa.

II. IMPORTANCE OF PROJECT

To credibly, and effectively assert the legitimate rights of former Jewish refugees from Arab countries, an international campaign is required that would both examine the mass violations of human rights and catalogue the loss of extensive communal and individual assets. That comprehensive data is not available today.

The Israeli Cabinet, in March 2002 and December 2003, called for efforts “to gather information, data, claims and documents... (and) record details of Jewish private and communal property in Arab countries and the denial of their rights”.

This *International Rights and Redress Campaign*, which has the support of the Government of Israel, can only be successful with the united efforts of Jewish communities and organizations worldwide.

Leadership is required and time is of the essence.



S. Daniel Abraham, Founding Chairman • Stanley A. Urman, Executive Director

Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC) is a coalition of Jewish communal organizations operating under the auspices of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the American Sephardi Federation, the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC), in partnership with the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League, B'nai Brith International, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and the World Sephardic Congress.

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III. GOALS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS AND REDRESS CAMPAIGN

- 1) *To conduct public education programs on the heritage and rights of former Jewish refugees from Arab countries; and*
- 2) *To register family history narratives, and catalogue communal and individual losses, suffered by Jews who fled from Arab countries.*

IV. INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS AND REDRESS CAMPAIGN

Jewish communities in some 40 countries will be participating in the *International Rights and Redress Campaign* to assert the rights of former Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Organized by the *World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC)* and *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC)*, the campaign would target governments, the media, Jewish organizations, synagogues and Jewish day schools in all Diaspora Jewish communities. The campaign will be launched in November 2006.

The *International Rights and Redress Campaign* will record and publicize the mass violations of human rights suffered by Jews under Arab regimes (e.g. murder; arbitrary arrest and detention; torture; stripping of citizenship; seizure of property; etc.); and document the loss of extensive communal and individual assets. Once collected, the documentation will be catalogued and preserved by a special unit in Israel's Ministry of Justice, established to compile the legal and factual basis necessary to assert the rights of Jews displaced from Arab countries.

WOJAC and JJAC will be assisted in this *International Rights and Redress Campaign* by a coalition of Jewish organizations in North and South America, Europe, Israel and South East Asia including, among others, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, American Sephardi Federation, Anti-Defamation League, Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA), Bnai Brith Hungary, B'nai Brith International, Board of Deputies of British Jews, Canadian Jewish Congress, CCCOJB, Centro Israelita de Bagota, Comité Central de la Comunidad Judía de Mexico, Comunidad de San Pedro Sula, Comunidad Judía Guatemalteca, Confederação Israelita do Brasil, Congregation of Israelite Associations of Venezuela, Congreso Judío Panamano Conseil representative des institutions juives de France (CRIF), Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain, HARIF, Historical Society of Jews from Egypt, Institut Sepharade Europeen, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, JIMENA, Nueva Congregacion Israelite, Svensk-Israel-Information - Swedish Israel Information For Israel and Democracy in the Middle East (FADIM) Unione delle Comunita Ebraiche Italiana and the World Sephardic Congress.



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